

**REALTÀ IMMAGINARIE /IMAGINING REALITIES** marks the 6th Edition of the ARP (Artist Residency Program) conceived by the Centro Luigi Di Sarro, and unveiled at their centre in Rome, Italy. The exhibition opens the 30<sup>th</sup> November at 18:00 and run until the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017. This year the ARP Residency in Rome includes two artists from South Africa: Skumbuzo (*Skubalisto*) Vabaza & Jordan Sweke.

Skumbuzo's narrative is multifaceted (including visual art, design, music and fashion), he often incorporates contemporary figuration, imbued traditional iconography and several urban 'graffiti' based languages. Skumbuzo's work aims to break down the human experience to its very core in order to expose the man made social constructs that serve to separate. His work is a bridge illustrating commonalities of consumerism, industrialization, corruption, hope, family, heart break, race, nationality and religion. His graffiti background and street art influence become obvious with his abstract use of colours and stylistic figure painting technique.

Jordan works within notions of the 'landscape' and the natural environment. He abstractly explores 'nature' - a sublime and all-encompassing force. More specifically, he explores the relationship which currently exists between humanity and nature and ways in which this relationship might be reconstituted. His main focus of production lies in large oil paintings, but a rounded conceptual framework is achieved through his creation of photographs, sculptures, video works, print media and installation.

Both these young Cape-Town-based creatives have come together in ARP Rome 2017/2018 for **REALTÀ IMMAGINARIE /IMAGINING REALITIES**. This presentation comprises separate artworks, as well as collaborative work resulting from merging conversations between the two artists. At the Centro Luigi Di Sarro, Skumbuzo's portrait paintings (in various mixed media) and Jordan's landscapes (monochrome drawings and canvas based paintings and video work) are installed alongside collaborative linocuts and paintings executed together while in Rome on the ARP Residency.

The relationship between people and their environments is one of the major themes of the exhibition. **REALTÀ IMMAGINARIE /IMAGINING REALITIES** aims to address the notions of each person's 'reality' - how they see the world, and in contrast what goes on unnoticed around us all. Skumbuzo's and Jordan's active conversations illustrate and imagine what is taking place for many, addressing ideas of *'marginalized poverty and the many unseen inhabitants of Rome'*. This speaks about relationships between foreigners and the Roman landscapes, and serves to address "the social impact of immigrants, and the realities that lie behind the idealised ways people frame what they see and live."

Skumbuzo and Jordan exist within the organic creative frameworks that pulsate around them in Cape Town, and both artists have an ongoing interest in periphery spaces and working-class areas. The ARP experience in Rome has served to ignite a joint conversation about the peoples in Rome, their 'landscapes' and the city itself. Although both artists actively acknowledge that this is a social commentary from an outsider's perspective, they too feel *'there are ridges of social and cultural similarities between Rome and Cape Town, that they both had been addressing in Cape Town*. By creating the mural artwork in the Corviale area of Rome (a social housing experiment and burgeoning creative area) both Skumbuzo and Jordan hope to reimagine the reality of what is present there: a location that was supposed to be a positive solution to housing issues, but instead is a context with many abandoned buildings, where crime and drugs are an ongoing problem.

In addition to their social commentary, the artists have endeavoured to critique the juxtaposition between nature and urbanisation: the kind of relationship the people in Rome have with their natural environments, and natural selves. The artists have observed there are *'remnants of human artefacts in nature, nature is surviving in heavily built up spaces, nature it feels is versus the city, and humans are versus nature'*. The artists explain: *'Rome is like a big breasted mother who feeds the whole of Italy. All of Italy is in Rome, not just Romans. One can almost feel Rome struggling under the pressure'*. **REALTÀ IMMAGINARIE /IMAGINING REALITIES**, investigates this reality too and gives scope to see the world re-examined and envisioned through Skumbuzo's and Jordan's synergistic discourse.